

the guardian weekly

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Level » Lower intermediate
Style » Lesson plan



Welcome to the Guardian Weekly's special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: advanced and lower intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from guardian.co.uk/weekly/. You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly's Learning English section on the site.

New crime novel co-written by 26 authors

Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould

Instructions

Lesson focus: reading, playing consequences
Materials: article, dictionaries
Time: 55 minutes

1 Bring in a novel that you have read and briefly tell students about it. Aim to establish the words: (*bestselling*) *author, novelist, chapter, character, plot, scene, outline*. **7 mins**

2 Ask what types of books they like reading. Put the following types on the board and check the meaning. Students order from their favourite to least favourite: *biographies, classics, crime novels, historical novels, horror or ghost stories, non-fiction books, romantic novels, science fiction novels, short stories, thrillers*. Students compare in pairs. **12 mins**

3 Hand out copies of the article. Ask students to look at the headline/photo. Ask: What is different about this new novel? **3 mins**

4 Go through the following sentences (Student task 1). Explain the game Consequences. Students read the text with dictionaries and write yes [Y] or no [N]. Class feedback. **10 mins**

The new novel ...

- a [] is written by famous authors.
- b [] was the idea of novelist Jeffery Deaver.
- c [] is about a US investigator.
- d [] is about the murder of Rosemary Thomas.
- e [] has an important chapter about a diary.
- f [] was discussed together by all the novelists.
- g [] is similar to the game of Consequences.

Answers a Y b N c Y d N e Y f N g Y

5 Write these questions on the board. Students read again and answer. Class feedback. **8 mins**

- a Who are three of the writers?
- b Why is the book unique?
- c Why was Rosemary Thomas executed?
- d Who is at the memorial service?
- e What didn't all the writers see?
- f What does the novel show?

Answers: a Jeffery Deaver, Alexander McCall Smith and Peter James. b It's the first time so many bestselling authors have worked together. c Because people thought she murdered her husband. d All the suspects. e What the others had written. f That most thriller writers think in a similar way.

6 Students play a version of Consequences starring two criminals who meet, discuss and try to commit a crime. Students write as much as possible for each stage. Start by giving out blank pieces of paper to students in pairs. At the top they write the name of a male criminal, then fold over the paper and pass to the next pair. They repeat for: name of female criminal, where/when they meet, what he said to her, what she said to him, the consequence. Students read out at the end. **15 mins**

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Materials sheet

Student tasks

- 1 Read the article with dictionaries and write yes [Y] or no [N] next to these sentences.

The new novel ...

- a ☐ is written by famous authors.
b ☐ was the idea of novelist Jeffery Deaver.
c ☐ is about a US investigator.
d ☐ is about the murder of Rosemary Thomas.
e ☐ has an important chapter about a diary.
f ☐ was discussed together by all the novelists.
g ☐ is similar to the game of Consequences.



Plot contributor, Peter James

- 2 Read the article again and answer these questions.

- a Who are three of the writers?

- b Why is the book unique?

- c Why was Rosemary Thomas executed?

- d Who is at the memorial service?

- e What didn't all the writers see?

- f What does the novel show?

Article: New crime novel co-written by 26 authors

- 1 It's the literary world's version of the game Consequences: 26 bestselling writers have teamed up to create one new crime novel called No Rest for the Dead.
- 2 The authors include Scottish novelist Alexander McCall Smith and Jeffery Deaver, the American author of the new James Bond novel. They have all taken it in turns to write the novel's chapters.
- 3 The idea for the novel came from Andrew Gulli, editor of the US's Strand Magazine which specialises in crime thrillers and mystery short stories. He said it was the first time that so many bestselling authors have been involved in a single project.
- 4 "If you add up the group of writers who have taken part in this book, you'll find they have sales of hundreds of millions of books," said Gulli. "In the history of publishing nothing like this has ever occurred."
- 5 The story is about an American detective called Jon Nunn. He is worried about a murder case that he thought he had solved 10 years earlier. Nunn becomes convinced that Rosemary Thomas, who was executed for the brutal murder of her husband, was actually innocent.
- 6 Nunn discovers that a memorial service is planned for Rosemary. All the other murder suspects are on the guest list and he realises that it is the ideal opportunity to find out who really did the crime.
- 7 British crime author Peter James contributed an important chapter to the novel, in which an old diary is discovered. "The hard thing was not knowing what any of the characters were like - none of us saw what the others had written," said James.
- 8 Writers were only given the outline of their scenes and James compared the experience to the parlour game of Consequences, in which a story is created word by word by a group of people. "It's amazing though - it actually works," he said. "It shows most thriller writers think in a similar ... way."

Original article by Alison Flood, rewritten by Janet Hardy-Gould